

## ***DON'T GIVE GOD ORDERS!***

### **TEXT:**

***Acts 9:6: And he [Saul] trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.***

**Giving orders, telling someone else what to do, seems to be something many, if not most of us, are expert at.**

It seems to be our very nature to want to be the boss and to run other peoples' lives. Jesus said the Pharisees were tops in this field. Jesus said,

***Matthew 23:3: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.***

Even we, as Christians, are often guilty of this in our prayer life. We spend most of our time telling God what to do. Then, in our work for Christ, we like to instruct others what they should do, but we don't lift a hand at all to help them. There are too many Chiefs, and not enough Indians.

**In view of this great fault in our domineering nature, there is one area where God draws the line very definitely — when it comes to the terms or conditions of our going to Heaven.**

We cannot select the terms of our getting right with God - no more than judges permit criminals to dictate to the court determinations. Do parents permit their children to dictate home policies? Will a judge permit the criminal to dictate the verdict or the sentence?

It all had its start with the triumphant testimony of Stephen while he was being martyred. If you are going to be a Christian, be a real one! When the words we say ring true to the life we live now, as new creatures in Christ, then what we say will be effective.

The reason the Gospel of Christ is not always effective today is that there are not enough genuine samples. I would rather see a Christian in real life than in words. I would rather see a sermon than just hear one. In other words,

changed lives — and not cheap professions — preach the most powerful sermons and attract the most people to Christ.

Stephen leaves the most remarkable testimony. He was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.



***Acts 6:8: And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.***

What did it cost him to be on fire for God?

There were certain people of the synagogue who ***were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which Stephen spake.***

They stirred up corrupt men to maliciously slander Stephen,

***Acts 6:11: We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.***

False witnesses were brought before the council. Stephen was caught in a trap set by the elders and scribes. He was so illuminated with the rays of celestial glory that his very countenance became radiant.



***Acts 6:15: And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.***

After the accusations were submitted that he had preached Jesus, Stephen was asked by the council, ***“Are these things so?”*** Upon which he delivered the most remarkable discourse which men would have to spend hundreds of hours trying to collect a persuading mass of material. In the power of the Holy Spirit, he addresses these conspirators with a directness and powerful reproof.

***Acts 7:51: . . . Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye.***

Then they gnashed on him with their teeth, and he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into Heaven and saw the Glory of God and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God.



**Acts 7:57-58:**

***57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,***

***58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.***

The stones kept flying as Stephen uttered his last words:

***Acts 7:60: And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.***

Saul heard Stephen's words — Stephen, calling on the name of this Jesus whom he served and preached. He is calling Him "Lord Jesus". The words stung Saul to the very marrow of the bones, like a fire. Saul had heard Stephen calling upon God, saying:



***Acts 7:59b: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.***

. . . and Stephen died.

The words haunted Saul every hour. "Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus."

Here is a man before Saul's very eyes, dying in the faith that Jesus is Lord. He declared he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He has said a great thing and has exhibited something more wonderful.

For those who trust in Jesus, death has no terrors. Why? Because Jesus is Lord Jesus! How could Stephen die so gladly? — Because Jesus is Lord, Jesus in his life, and He is the same Lord in death. The storm now rages in Saul's bosom as he tries to throw off conviction by taking on a larger task.

Saul is a Pharisee, well-educated, and is zealous for the law. He has not only consented to Stephen's death, but is more determined to blot out the very

memory of this Name of Jesus Christ from being Lord to anyone else. He goes to the High Priest for letters to Damascus for permission to bring — bound to Jerusalem — men and women who believed in this Jesus Religion.

A man filled with the Spirit cannot but be courageous, for the truth burns like a fire in his bones. The things concerning the Kingdom of God and eternity stand out before his anointed eyes in the clear light of our Lord Jesus Christ. They have not heard such as this from any of their own leaders. Even this young Saul, an orator, could not sway crowds as this man is swaying them.

Their fury is not in the least cooling off the fire of God in Stephen's soul. Jesus said in:

***Matthew 10:39: He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.***

Stephen is minding God. Jesus is more to them than all their hate and anger.

As Saul goes to Damascus, suddenly the lightning of God's power strikes him down.

***Acts 9:4: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?***



If preachers today would tell of hearing voices and seeing lights, they would be laughed at and ridiculed. Saul said,

***Acts 9:5: Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest:***

There is that awful Name again — Jesus! It came from the lips of Stephen, and now from the very Heavens. It must be a powerful Name. And Saul, trembling and astonished, said, as recorded in **Acts 9:6**,

***Acts 9:6: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"***

His or

tell you what to do, dear hearts?

Children of God, know that your own bodies are the temples of the living God Who is in you as a believer in Christ Jesus. You are not your own for you are bought with a price.

***Acts 4:12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.***

Paul — a Pharisee of the Pharisees and a man noted for his long prayers —and the men of his sect, prayed three times daily and further in the market place to be heard of men; how religious they were. Many say prayers, few *pray* prayers.

**Many say prayers, few pray prayers.**

It costs a self-righteous man to stoop to take orders. The high flavor of self-righteousness in his prayers must be put away.

Be not angry when God blows away all your chaff of good works. Thank Him that it has been blown away this soon while there is time to gather in a true harvest of gold, silver, and precious stones. Wood is a dead tree; hay is dead grass; stubble is dead grain; and when tried in fire at the Judgment, they will burn up.



The men who traveled with Saul stood frozen in their tracks, speechless. They heard this voice which spoke to Saul, but they could find nobody from which the voice could possibly have come.

It is wonderful to hear the Master speak, especially when you are on the right side of Calvary. Nothing could be sweeter to the soul than when God told my wife and me where He was going to use us to preach the Gospel over a year before we found the place! We went through blood and fire, too, but knowing where He wanted us to be made it easier.

God works on the other end of the line. He told Ananias in a vision all about Saul.

God knows where we live and whom He can trust to lead souls to Christ. Ananias questioned the Lord, but these are the precious words I must linger

on, and every child of God and sinner will do well to listen carefully: “. . . **for behold he [Saul] prayeth**”. (**Acts 9:11**)

All the praying for hours, flavored with self-righteousness, had prevailed nothing before. How he had prayed. But God sits calm and indifferent, paying no attention. The prayers hit the ceiling. I know of those who have prayed at one another. I know of those who have prayed like the Pharisee, of which sect Saul was a big-shot.

**Luke 18:11: “God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are . . .”**

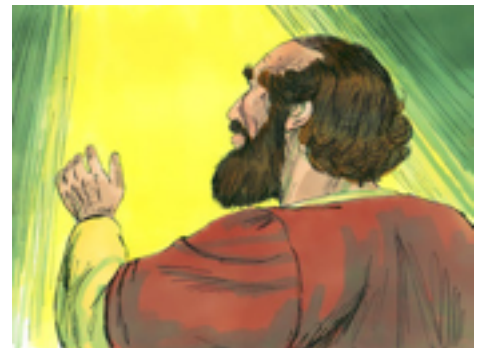
We have seen those who got their little prayerbook out and bending on one knee, start off a great swelling of delightful phrases of the best prayer that could be put together. But the Most High disregards empty formalities. At last the poor creature puts away the prayer book, forgets his poetic prayers, and cries out in deepest conviction. *“Oh, Lord Jesus, I am the worst of sinners not worthy that Thou shouldst even hear me, but please forgive my sins.”*

All Heaven is stirred. This prayer has rung the bells of Heaven. Sweet music fills the air. Jesus receives the cry for mercy and pardon.

**No prayer prayed in the Name of Jesus, out of a repentant heart, is left unanswered.**

The Lord Jesus immediately sends the message to one of His servants, Ananias, and tells him what to do and where to go.

**Acts 9:11: And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,**



Whenever the Lord God of Heaven recognizes a prayer, it is the surest argument of safety to go to the fighting sinner and now lead him to Christ.

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